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SUBJECT: FSM PRESIDENT INITIATES NATIONAL PRAYER DAY, LINKED TO U.S.
THANKSGIVING AND NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST, TO OVERCOME INTERNAL
DIVIDES

¶1. (U) To commemorate the Federated States of Micronesia's first National Prayer Day, President Emmanuel Mori hosted a National Prayer Day Celebration that pulled together all branches of the national government, Pohnpei State representatives, leaders from the Catholic and Protestant churches, and diplomatic representatives. Mori told the gathering he hoped to use the day as a means to ease tensions among various government agencies, including at the state and national levels, within his own Cabinet, between the national and state governments, and between the national government and the FSM Congress, which are all under strain.

¶2. (U) Mori told the Ambassador that his decision to institute a National Prayer Day was inspired by his participation in the February 2008 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. Mori stated the non-denominational nature of the U.S. event and the stirring accounts by key speakers, some of whom were business leaders who had reached out to help developing nations, had deeply impressed him. Mori specifically noted the impact Pastor Rick Warren had on him and stated he hoped to invite Warren to the FSM for next year's celebration. Mori added that Warren had presented Mori with 15 autographed copies of his popular book "A Purpose Driven Life." According to Mori, the book is changing his life and he gave the other copies to all members of the FSM Congress.

¶3. (U) Mori added that one of the most important parts of his state visit to the U.S. was his participation in the National Prayer Breakfast. He directly linked FSM's new National Prayer Day to that experience, issuing a Presidential proclamation that this event will coincide with Thanksgiving in the United States.

(Note: Anecdotally people have referred to the "National Prayer Day" as day of thanks or thanks giving day. End Note.)

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Mori is a deeply religious, observant Catholic. He clearly drew sincere inspiration from the National Prayer Breakfast, which he sees as a model that the FSM might draw upon to overcome tribal, state, and other intragovernmental rivalries that currently plague governance in the FSM. Mori, however, seems to ignore that he has used or stoked those same rivalries for his political gain. After National Prayer Day, he departed for a voyage to the westernmost, outer islands of his home State of Chuuk, inserting himself into sensitive and largely covert campaigning for March 2009 state and national Congress elections. Mori's chances for exerting more influence over Chuuk and gaining Congressional support for a second term of office in 2012 depends upon stacking key positions with Chuukese cohorts. As an experienced politician working within the current system, it remains unclear if he will focus on easing or exploiting divides within the FSM's political leadership. End Comment.

HUGHESMK